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ABSTRACT

This document reports on the activities of England's National Literacy Strategy--the government's target and management from 1997-2002. The Literacy Task Force was established in May 1996 and charged with developing a strategy for substantially raising standards of literacy in elementary schools over a 5- to 10-year period. Section One of the report discusses the following: (1) Target; (2) Preconditions; (3) The National Literacy Project (NLP); (4) Management of the National Literacy Strategy 1997-2002; (5) Teacher Development; (6) Implications for Other Aspects of Policy; (7) Children with Special Educational Needs; (8) Parental Responsibilities; (9) Family Literacy; (10) National Year of Reading; (11) Summer Literacy Schools; and (12) Secondary Schools. Section Two of the report cites some of the features which the second phase of the Strategy should include, such as ensuring quality professional training for teachers, continuing to improve links between elementary and secondary schools, and building on the experience of the first phase of the Strategy to enhance home-school links. Contains three appendixes: Key Stage 2 English National Curriculum Tests--Level 4 Description; a Brief Description of the National Literacy Project (Annex A--Extract from the NLP Framework for Teaching; Annex B--The Literacy Hour); and National Literacy Strategy--Professional Development Timetable. (NKA)

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Appendix 3: National Literacy Strategy: Professional development timetable

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Introduction: Implementation of the NLS - Final Report

The Literacy Task Force was established on 31 May 1996 by David Blunkett, then Shadow Secretary of State for Education and Employment. It was charged with developing, in time for an incoming Labour government, a strategy for substantially raising standards of literacy in primary schools over a five to ten year period.

We published our preliminary findings on 28 February. We are grateful to Research Machines for funding the printing and distribution of our interim report to all primary schools in England. We consulted widely on the report and received numerous replies. The comments were analysed and presented to the Literacy Task Force in May for consideration.

We have received widespread support for the idea of a steady, consistent strategy for raising standards of literacy which is sustained over a long period and is a central priority for the education service as a whole. We have drawn on a huge amount of information and thinking in reaching our final conclusions. Our thanks are due to all who contributed to the consultation exercise.

Our interim report looked across ten years and offered observations and preliminary recommendations. We have not lost sight of this original remit but our recommendations in this final report focus on what can be done during the present Parliament. We also propose specific initiatives that the government might take forward in the next five years to ensure that it is in a position to move beyond the target it has set for 2002.

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CHAIRMAN OF THE LITERACY TASK FORCE

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Summary of recommendations

The main recommendations of the Literacy Task Force are:

Section One: The National Literacy Strategy 1997-2002

1. The Target

- By 2002 80% of 11 year olds should reach the standard expected for their age in English (ie. Level 4) in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests.

2. Preconditions

- Bringing about a dramatic improvement in literacy standards is possible only if there is a consistent national strategic approach over a full Parliament.
- All those involved, including government, LEAs, teachers, parents, governors, the media, publishers and business must accept their part of the responsibility for taking up the challenge.

3. The National Literacy Project (NLP)

- The National Literacy Project provides a sound basis for the professional development strategy we wish to recommend.

4. Management of the National Literacy Strategy 1997-2002

- The professional development strategy should be overseen by a Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Group based in the Standards and Effectiveness Unit in the DfEE.
- The Standards and Effectiveness Unit (SEU) should provide a clear operational blueprint for the implementation of the strategy.
- The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Group should keep the National Literacy Project (NLP) under review and ensure that the national literacy strategy is kept informed of its work and of developments abroad.
- The approach to teaching literacy should be based on the NLP and should be adopted in every primary school, unless a school can demonstrate through its literacy action plan, schemes of work and performance in Key Stage 2 tests, that the approach it has adopted is at least as effective.
- The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Group and the SEU should liaise with the Numeracy Task Force to ensure that the national strategies for literacy and numeracy are managed coherently and do not overload schools.

5. Teacher development

i. Initial Teacher Training (ITT)

- Every course of initial teacher training for primary teachers should give the highest possible priority to ensuring that all trainee primary teachers are taught how to teach literacy in accordance with the government's new nationally established requirements.

- Priority during induction should be given to ensuring that new primary teachers consolidate their knowledge and skills in the teaching of literacy.

ii. Professional Development of teachers and others

- A programme of planned professional development in the teaching of literacy is essential for all primary teachers. All schools should be offered a core entitlement to training and support.

- The programme should commence in the Summer of 1998 and should be linked to the National Year of Reading. The professional development strategy should target four key groups in primary schools:

  all teachers, who require skills not just of teaching literacy to beginners but of teaching pupils to read and write with fluency and discrimination;

  those teachers with a responsibility for literacy or special educational needs who require knowledge and understanding of how to devise and implement a coherent literacy strategy for the school;

  headteachers, who need to understand the leadership and management implications of the proposed policy; and

  school governors, who need to understand the implications of the literacy strategy for their work.

iii. The Professional Development Strategy

The Government's Role

To meet the needs of LEAs, schools and parents the government should implement and fund a programme for the professional development strategy in literacy which will make possible:

the employment of some 200 or more consultants to carry out literacy training and to support professional development in schools,

training for literacy consultants and their line managers;

training for headteachers, school literacy co-ordinators and dedicated literacy governors, covering, amongst other things, the timetabling and managing of a literacy hour;

the commissioning of distance learning materials on the teaching of literacy to support LEAs' and schools' INSET work;

support to schools to invest in resources, for example "big books" and multiple copies of books for shared reading;

intensive training and support for schools which need it, to allow headteachers, literacy co-ordinators and other key members of staff to attend training covering planning, classroom organisation, and teaching methods;

more non-contact time for literacy co-ordinators to disseminate work to other members of staff in schools requiring additional support;

the training of classroom assistants to Specialist Teacher Assistant (STA) status to support reading and literacy in schools; and

the continuation of the NLP in those areas where it is already established.

- The professional development strategy should be consistent with any future professional development strategy for numeracy.

- The national literacy strategy should be funded through the Grants for Education Support and Training (GEST) programme.

The School's Role

- To receive their core entitlement all schools should be required to:

  set literacy targets and agree them with their LEA;

  devote a structured hour each day to literacy for all pupils;

  produce a school literacy action plan for the next two years;

  produce detailed and practical schemes of work for literacy in line with the NC requirements, and comparable to that used in the NLP; and

  dedicate 3 INSET days to quality staff training in the 1998/99 academic year.

The LEA's Role

- By April 1999 all LEAs should submit Education Development Plans (EDP) on a three-year rolling basis detailing how standards will be raised in schools in their area. EDPs should give high priority to literacy.

- Inspection of LEAs should have a particular emphasis on their plans for supporting the national literacy strategy.

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- LEAs should draw up detailed action plans for raising standards of literacy in their primary schools. In order to bid for literacy funding that will be available through GEST the action plans should include:

  detailed arrangements for setting literacy targets at school level, linked to the LEA targets and, in turn, national targets;

  the structure of management and accountability for literacy improvement work in the LEA;

  arrangements for supporting school action planning;

  arrangements for the line management of locally recruited consultants;

  a detailed implementation plan covering a period of at least two years, identifying those schools in need of additional support;

  effective and practical strategies for delivering literacy improvement in weak and failing schools;

  arrangements for monitoring and reporting on schools' performance; and

  arrangements for co-ordinating other relevant LEA services and initiatives designed to raise levels of literacy in schools and the community.

- LEAs should run local training conferences for heads, governors and a key teacher from each primary school. The conferences should cover the management of literacy, the implementation of the literacy hour, and setting priorities for staff training and the literacy curriculum. These should be followed by modular training programmes focusing on the needs identified by the LEA and school action plans.

- LEAs should target additional training and support to schools with low attainment in literacy. These schools should follow a more structured training and development programme based on the work of the National Literacy Project.

6. Implications for Other Aspects of Policy

i. **National Curriculum**

- a high priority should be given to literacy and numeracy in the review of the National Curriculum which is due to begin in 1998, enabling changes to be in place by the year 2000.

- Advice from SCAA/QCA on giving greater focus to literacy and numeracy, requested by Ministers in June 1997, should enable primary schools to implement the national literacy strategy.

- OFSTED should take account of SCAA's advice in future inspections of primary schools.

ii. **National Assessment**

- It is essential that the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 should:

  test reading and writing effectively;

  provide detailed information on reading and writing performance;

  be marked externally, ensuring greater public credibility; and

  be consistent over time.

iii. **Inspection**

- The OFSTED inspection framework should be modified to ensure that inspectors seek evidence of a whole school strategy for the improvement of literacy standards, including professional development and the teaching of literacy across the curriculum (in both primary and secondary schools).

- All those involved in the inspection of primary schools should participate in training on literacy in primary schools to ensure that they understand the details of the proposed strategy.

- OFSTED inspectors should examine the impact of the literacy strategy in a substantial representative sample of primary schools in the years 1999 to 2002.

iv. **The Framework for Professional Development**

- Assessment should be an explicit requirement of the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) as well as, where necessary, training of all aspiring headteachers, both primary and secondary, in the management of literacy.

- Drawing on the TTA's work on subject leaders, standards for literacy co-ordinators should be developed.

- The new training programme for serving headteachers should ensure coverage of the management of literacy.

v. **The Basic Skills Agency (BSA)**

- The BSA should consider the possibility of separate recognition of literacy and numeracy in its proposed Basic Skills Quality Mark.

- The BSA should build clear national standards into the Quality Mark to ensure that it maintains credibility.

vi. **Reading Recovery**

- Reading Recovery should be kept under review with the aim both of refining it over time and of seeing if its outcomes can be achieved more cost effectively.

7. Children with Special Educational Needs

- We recommend that, under the Code of Practice arrangements, literacy needs are explicitly covered in individual education plans

(IEPs).

8. Parental responsibilities

- Parents can help to improve children's literacy, and this can be encouraged by:

  the introduction of home-school contracts which at primary level should emphasise not only attendance, punctuality, good behaviour and the school's responsibilities but also the essential nature of work at home to support a child in learning to read; and

  urging parents to spend 20 minutes or so each day either reading to children or hearing them read;

  a high profile media campaign encouraging parents to support their children's reading;

  finding cost-effective means of getting advice to parents via the health visitor network and doctors' surgeries;

  urging businesses which are in regular contact with parents to promote the importance of reading and writing.

9. Family Literacy

- Family literacy projects should continue to be funded in disadvantaged areas. These projects should be extended as and when resources become available.

10. The National Year of Reading

- The school year 1998/9 should be designated 'The National Year of Reading'. There should be a media campaign and a series of events aimed at urging:

  parents to support schools in their efforts to raise reading standards;

  adults with poor literacy skills to try to improve them;

  the media to recognise its influence and to seek imaginative means of encouraging children and young people to read, and encouraging parents and other adults to support them in doing so;

  publishers and booksellers to contribute to the campaign to raise reading standards and awareness of literacy; and

  business to play a part through, for example, partnerships with the public sector.

- We recommend the establishment of a planning group - with high level representatives of all the key interests - co-ordinated by the DfEE.

11. Summer Literacy Schools

- Fifty Summer Literacy Schools have been set up this summer. These pilot schemes should lead to:

evaluation of a number of different models in 1997-98, and the dissemination of those models of summer school support which have been demonstrated to work;

the establishment of a specific GEST activity from 1998-99 to enable summer school provisions to be expanded; and

the development of a national scheme to be launched in 1999.

12. Secondary Schools

- While the literacy strategy for primary education is being put in place, the Standards and Effectiveness Unit should seek to identify and disseminate what active measures successful secondary schools take to improve literacy standards. This should build on the proposed OFSTED study of successful literacy practice at secondary level. OFSTED's study should include an analysis of:

  the problems which the survey schools are facing and the costs of addressing them; the account taken by secondary schools of Key Stage 2 test data and the means by which assessments of attainment on entry are made;

  how much and what kind of reading and writing, in class and at home, is being done in a range of subjects;

  expenditure on books and the quantity and quality of books available;

  the characteristics of good teaching of reading and writing in key subjects;

  the effectiveness of work by special educational needs and language support teams;

  the use of specific interventions such as paired reading, volunteer tutoring and after-school activities;

  what is done to promote independent reading for pleasure and information, including effective steps taken to encourage boys in particular;

  the use made of school and public libraries; and

  the contribution of information and communication technology to literacy teaching in secondary schools.

- We welcome the development of an ITT national curriculum for English, which all trainee English teachers should follow. To extend this training effort we recommend that the TTA should:

  build on the new QTS standard by making a unit on the teaching of reading and writing a requirement of secondary teacher training in subjects where effective use of these skills is essential;

  focus on literacy within the framework for professional development and identify the criteria for literacy training which courses should be expected to meet

- We recommend that SCAA, in reviewing the National Curriculum, should consider the case for ensuring that:

  explicit and systematic attention to the skills of reading and writing becomes an inescapable feature of the programmes of study in relevant subjects; and schools, where there is an evident need, are able to concentrate intensively on improving literacy in Year 7.

- Within their overall strategy for literacy, LEAs should give deliberate attention to creating and maintaining co-operation between secondary schools and their feeder primary schools.

- A small-scale, GEST-funded development programme, which would build on the work of the National Literacy Project for primary schools, should be established to help secondary schools improve literacy.

Section Two:
The National Literacy Strategy 2002-2006

- The second phase of the strategy should include some of the following features:

  ensuring that the ICT training for teachers, which will become available through funding from the People's Lottery, also contributes to the enhancement of their skills in teaching literacy;

  taking full advantage of the high-quality educational materials which will be provided through the National Grid for Learning to promote effective literacy teaching;

  improving the diagnostic and pedagogical skills of teachers in relation to pupils with various specific reading difficulties;

  building on the experience of the first phase of the strategy to enhance home-school links;

  building on the experience of the first phase of the strategy to make greater and more effective use of trained classroom assistants;

  continuing to improve links between primary and secondary schools;

  enhancing the capability of all primary teachers to assess children, analyse data from assessment and apply it in the teaching process; and

  building on the growing capacity of primary schools to improve themselves, which should result from the implementation of the policies set out in the recent White Paper, *Excellence in schools*.

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Section Two - The National Literacy Strategy 2002-2006

Appendix 1. Key Stage 2 English

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Related Items

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Evaluation of National Literacy Project: Summary Report

The target

1. When David Blunkett established the Literacy Task Force, he asked us to design a strategy to meet an ambitious target; namely that:

   "By the end of a second term of a Labour government, all children leaving primary school
   . . . will have reached a reading age of at least eleven."

2. One of the first acts of the Labour government was the announcement of new national targets for literacy and numeracy . By 2002:

- 80% of all 11 year olds will reach the standards expected of their age in English, (ie. Level 4) [1] in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum (NC) tests; and
- 75% of all 11 year olds will reach the standards expected of their age in maths in the Key Stage 2 NC tests.

These targets are tough but achievable if parents, schools and the government work together.

3. A number of those who responded to our interim report expressed doubts about the use of Key Stage 2 NC tests but none provided a better alternative. It is our belief that SCAA is now in a position to ensure that there is both professional and public confidence in the tests. We expect the Authority to give priority to ensuring this is the case.

4. We see the 2002 national target for 11 year olds as the main priority for the government's first term of office. It is a major landmark en route to our ultimate goal of ensuring that virtually all children in primary school achieve at least Level 4 in English in the National Curriculum by the age of 11 in the first decade of the next century.

5. Our goal is that ultimately almost all children will achieve this target, although we recognise that a small number of children may not be able to do so because of their special educational needs.

[1] Level 4 is the standard expected of 11 year olds. A description of the standard can be found in Appendix 1 to this report.

National Curriculum tests: Level 4 description

Appendix 2 - A brief description of the National Literacy Project

Appendix 3: National Literacy Strategy: Professional development timetable

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Section Two - The National Literacy Strategy 2002-2006

Appendix 1: Key Stage 2 English

The context

6. We recognise that the government's target for 2002 is ambitious. We believe that the evidence - both national and international - suggests it is achievable. Bringing about a dramatic improvement in literacy standards is possible, but only if there is a consistent national strategic approach over the lifetime of a Parliament. This in turn demands a new, mature, active partnership. All those involved, including government, local authorities, teachers, parents, governors, the media, publishers and business must accept their part of the responsibility for taking up the challenge.

7. We start from the assumption that the ambitious school improvement programme set out in the recently published White Paper, *Excellence in schools*, will provide the context for our proposals. We believe that the combination of that programme together with the government's commitment to increase the proportion of national income spent on education - towards which the recent budget provided a significant step - provide a unique opportunity to raise literacy standards to a new level.

Related items

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Appendix 1: Key Stage 2 English

Early years education

8. The White Paper, Excellence in schools, highlights the importance of nursery education, especially for those children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The quality of children's pre-school and primary education has been shown to have a major impact on their achievement at 16 and their social skills.

9. The White Paper signals the government's determination to provide a sound beginning for all children's education by offering;

- good quality early years education;
- 'desirable learning outcomes', which set out important areas of learning for young children; and
- careful assessment of children when they start primary school.

10. The emphasis placed on developing literacy skills in nursery schools is an important first step in children's reading and writing. The government's plans to provide nursery places to all four year olds whose parents want it for them, will contribute to the achievement of our target. The main focus of our strategy however, relates to improving the teaching of literacy in primary schools.

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The teaching of literacy

11. There have been few more vigorous educational controversies in the last decade than the one over how literacy, and in particular reading, should be taught. Opposing sides in the national debate have vociferously proclaimed their loyalty to "phonics" or "real books". But while this often shallow debate has raged, research and the understanding of "best practice" have moved on. The chief strategic task is to ensure that primary teachers and schools are well-informed about best practice and have the knowledge and skills to act upon it.

12. There are a number of general factors which characterise effective teaching[2]:

- ensuring a good match between curriculum, teaching and the learners' varied needs;
- good management of time, involving maximising learning time and pupils' levels of time on task in classrooms, and minimising of time used on administration or control;
- high levels of teacher 'higher order' interaction with classes, high frequency of questioning (especially with challenge) and frequent provision of feedback; and
- structured classrooms, with a limited range of activities being pursued at any one time and a limited range of lesson goals in any session.

13. Meanwhile, both OFSTED and other research suggest that the successful teaching of literacy in general:

- involves early identification of what pupils already know about language and any difficulties they are experiencing, followed by targeted and positive support which teaches them about the system of written language and how to recognise and correct their own errors;
- makes initial and continuing progress in reading and writing for all pupils a central objective of the school;
- involves parents in positive and practical ways through discussions at school and work with pupils at home;
- is based on a teaching programme which is thoroughly planned, with clear learning objectives, and provides direct teaching and careful assessment through to the end of Key Stage 2;
- capitalises on pupils' enthusiasm for communication to make reading and writing more enjoyable;
- teaches all aspects of literacy explicitly, directly and intensively in

National Curriculum tests: Level 4 description

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their own right, and creates deliberate opportunities in the teaching of other subjects to extend experience and consolidate skills;

- shows good understanding of techniques for beginning reading and writing, of how to select and combine them and how to judge their impact;
- uses carefully sequenced, whole-class, group and individual work to focus on strategies and skills, with the teacher combining instruction, demonstration, questioning and discussion, providing structure for subsequent tasks, and giving help and constructive response;
- makes use of systematic records of progress to monitor pupils' strengths and weaknesses, to intervene in a discriminating way and to plan the next stage of work; and
- makes good use of classroom assistants and volunteers, briefing them on how to work with pupils and to record what they do

14. The successful teaching of *reading* in particular:

- equips pupils at the earliest stage to draw on the sources of knowledge needed when reading for meaning, including phonic knowledge (simple and complex sound/symbol relationships), graphic knowledge (patterns within words), word recognition (a sight vocabulary which includes common features of words), grammatical knowledge (checking for sense through the ways words are organised) and contextual information (meaning derived from the text as a whole);
- continues the direct teaching of reading techniques through both key stages, building systematically on the skills pupils have learnt earlier in, for example, tackling unfamiliar words;
- provides a range of reading material, usually based around a core reading programme, but substantially enriched with other good quality material, including information texts;
- stimulates and requires good library use;
- extends pupils' reading by focused work on challenging texts with the whole class or in groups;
- involves frequent opportunities for pupils to hear, read and discuss texts and to think about the content and the language used; and
- gives time for productive individual reading at school and at home, and opportunities for pupils to share their response with others.

15. The successful teaching of *writing*:

- gives balanced attention to pupils' progress in handling content, style and the presentation of writing;
- provides structured teaching of handwriting, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction and the selection of words, in the context of writing for a purpose;
- makes sure that pupils use different forms of writing and learn about their distinctive features;
- uses a range of starting points to stimulate writing, and structures tasks to suit differing capabilities;
- explains the writing task so that pupils are clear about what is needed;

- teaches pupils to plan, draft and revise their work systematically; and

- gives a rapid and constructive response to pupils' writing and makes sure that pupils learn from what they have done in order to take the next steps.

[2] B.P.M. Creemers (1994) *The Effective Classroom* (London, Cassell).
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The National Literacy Project (NLP)

16. The National Literacy Project (NLP) has developed a detailed framework for teaching reading and writing based on the evidence of inspection and research. The consultation on our preliminary report has revealed strong and widespread support for the NLP, and has reinforced the view that our proposals should build on the valuable foundation it has provided. Appendix 2 offers a brief description of the project. Its approach is based on:

- making literacy a visible priority and providing a detailed approach to teaching the NC Programmes of Study, as they relate to literacy;
- improving a school's management of literacy through target-setting linked to systematic planning, monitoring and evaluation;
- a framework for teaching which gives clear expectations through a programme of term by term teaching objectives and a common approach to curricular planning;
- a requirement that each participating school will provide literacy lessons, timetabled for an hour a day. During this literacy hour the project requires that for at least 60 per cent of the time pupils are working with the teacher either in whole class work or in groups;
- a clear focus on literacy instruction during the hour. The teachers in the project are required to develop the range of teaching strategies this requires;
- securing progress and consistency in teaching methods and classroom organisation from class to class throughout the school;
- clarity about three strands of the literacy programme which are as follows:

word level phonic, spelling and vocabulary
sentence level grammar and punctuation
text level comprehension and composition

- providing training and support to build teachers' curricular knowledge;
- providing training and support for specialist teacher assistants (STAs); and
- encouraging family and community support for literacy achievement.

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The management of literacy at school level

17. However well teachers are capable of teaching literacy, they can only succeed fully if they are supported by effective school management. There is extensive evidence of the management strategies that work best in educational and other organisations. Assuming there is a clear national view on how best to teach literacy, there is no reason to consider the management of literacy in primary schools any differently from the management of other key educational priorities.

18. The following characteristics are crucially important in creating the setting for the development of literacy[3]:

i. a well-informed headteacher who understands the central principles of effective approaches to literacy, sets high expectations and provides consistent leadership;

ii. a systematic school approach to the professional development of teachers and other staff involved in the teaching of literacy;

iii. effective arrangements, which take account of national standards, for monitoring the progress in literacy of individual children and the school as a whole;

iv. targets for each child, including those with special educational needs;

v. high expectations of what children are able to achieve;

vi. a strong climate of academic push in which high levels of achievement are reflected both in a school's mission and the use of regular homework;

vii. effective systems for communicating with parents about the performance of their child, the performance of the school as a whole, the teaching approach used by the school and the ways in which parents can help the school and especially their own child or children to achieve their literacy goals;

viii. the consistency and cohesion of the school's organisation; and

ix. understanding how to ensure that money spent on books and other reading materials is used wisely to provide a range of graded levels of books, both fiction and non-fiction.

19. Clearly, ensuring that all schools benefit from such effective management must be a key part of our strategy. It is important that governing bodies recognise the centrality of literacy and support the development of a strategic approach to it. It will be essential, through existing governor training programmes and other means, to heighten governor awareness of the importance of literacy and to promote among governors the skills they need to oversee the strategy at school level.

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Management of the National Literacy Strategy

20. The overall strategy should be overseen by a Strategy Group based in the Standards and Effectiveness Unit (SEU) in the DfEE. It should include senior representatives of OFSTED, SCAA, TTA and BSA as well as experienced educators. It is our view that the Strategy Group should address both literacy and numeracy to ensure that any national development programmes are managed coherently.

21. We look to the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Group (LNSG) and the SEU to provide a clear operational blueprint for the implementation of our plans. They will need to set out clearly the role and function of local authorities to ensure that our recommendations become reality.

22. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Group should keep the NLP under review and ensure that the strategy in this country continues to be informed by developments abroad. It should commission an independent evaluation of the NLP and ensure that the outcomes of that evaluation are reflected in the National Literacy Strategy.

23. The teacher development programme outlined below will have the flexibility to take account of other major development programmes adopted by schools or LEAs to improve the quality of teaching and standards of achievement in literacy. It is not our intention to impose wholesale the NLP planning and teaching procedures where schools can show they already have an effective teacher development programme. Our presumption will be that the approach to teaching we set out, based on the NLP, will be adopted by every school unless a school can demonstrate, through its literacy action plan and schemes of work and its performance in NC Key Stage tests, that the approach it has adopted is at least as effective.

24. We are mindful that our literacy strategy should be consistent with any future professional development strategy for numeracy which the Numeracy Task Force, established in May by the new government, under the chairmanship of Professor David Reynolds, might put forward. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Group and the SEU should liaise with the Numeracy Task Force to ensure that any professional development programmes for literacy and numeracy are part of a coherent strategy which does not overload schools.

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Teacher development

25. The ability of primary teachers to teach literacy is by far the most important factor in whether or not children learn to read and write well. If all primary school pupils are to read and write well, then all primary teachers need to learn how to teach literacy well. Obvious though this may seem, it is not the case at present. There is substantial evidence that standards in the teaching of reading and writing vary hugely from school to school. Many primary teachers have not had systematic opportunities to update their skills to take account of the evidence described above. This means that their teaching approach is often based upon a distant recollection of what they learnt when they trained and their experience since then. This is an unacceptably haphazard state of affairs. Primary teachers have found themselves a target for criticism, particularly in relation to the teaching of reading over the last few years. Yet the system has not done nearly enough to enable them to change what they do.

26. There has never been a major national initiative to enable all primary teachers to learn the most effective methods of teaching literacy and how to apply them. The previous government did not create the structures or incentives to ensure that all schools learn from the best practice of the most effective schools. Instead, there has been a series of unconnected worthy initiatives which have not had the scope or ambition necessary to tackle the problem across the country. If teachers are to change, they need opportunities to learn the best approaches, and incentives to adopt them. Ultimately, we need a culture in which primary teachers themselves expect to adopt the best methods as a matter of professional pride.

27. The strategy we propose will, we hope, offer teachers the opportunity to do so cost effectively and provide incentives to ensure they are taken up. If what we propose is implemented, it will be the most ambitious attempt ever in this country to change for the better teaching approaches across the entire education service. Our teacher development plans have two elements. The first relates to the initial training of teachers; the second to the professional development of teachers, their support staff, and school governors.

a) Initial Teacher Training (ITT)

28. We welcome the government's decision to implement from September 1997 the new clear standards which all trainees must meet before being awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). These standards specify what is expected in relation to aspects such as class management, behaviour and discipline, subject knowledge and effective teaching and assessment methods. We also welcome the new ITT National Curriculum for primary English (and mathematics) which a number of ITT providers will be implementing from September 1997 and comes into force for all HEIs from 1 September 1998. These recommendations are a major advance on the arrangements currently in place. They send an unequivocal message about the importance of literacy by specifying the essential core of knowledge, understanding and skills which all primary trainees, on all courses of initial training,

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must be taught.

29. We are certainly persuaded that these new requirements will do much to ensure that sufficient attention is given to the teaching of literacy. In New Zealand, for example, the amount of time devoted to reading instruction is double that here. We welcome the fact that, in future, every course of initial teacher training for primary teachers will give the highest possible priority to ensuring that all trainee primary teachers are taught - in accordance with nationally established requirements - how to teach literacy.

30. The New Zealand experience also provides another important insight. There, teaching practice in school reinforces what has been learnt in the higher education institution (HEI) because there is a consistency of approach between schools and HEIs. The new requirements for ITT announced by the government in June will ensure that those training teachers in schools, where trainees spend two thirds of their time, and those in their partner HEIs will be working to the same blueprint. As our overall strategy is implemented, variation among schools and among HEIs will be reduced still further.

31. Finally, we welcome the government's plans to consult on the reintroduction of an induction year and urge that priority is given during it to ensuring that new primary teachers continue to consolidate their skills in the teaching of literacy. We welcome the introduction of the TTA Career Entry Profile which will highlight newly qualified teachers' strengths and development needs and thereby help schools to offer targeted monitoring and support in this crucial first year.

b) Professional Development of teachers and others

32. In 1996-97, just under 13,000 people were recruited to primary ITT courses in England. Thus altering ITT, while crucial in the long term, will not bring substantial change in the short or medium term. The key to our strategy must be to provide the 190,000 or so serving primary teachers with the skills they will require. A programme of planned professional development in the teaching of literacy as an entitlement for all primary teachers is therefore essential. We hope in time that a professional development strategy will be extended to secondary schools, where too few children extend their literacy skills to the high levels that the modern world demands.

33. The White Paper, *Excellence in schools*, recognises the need for a framework against which teachers might map their professional development needs. It is our intention that the training programme outlined below should link coherently with the evolution of an overall professional development strategy.

34. Four target groups, each with different but overlapping roles, should be considered:

i. all primary teachers who require the skills not just of teaching literacy to beginners but of teaching pupils to read and write with fluency and discrimination;

ii. literacy/language and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) - those teachers in primary school with a responsibility for literacy or special educational needs across the school - who require, in addition to the above, knowledge and understanding of how to devise and implement a coherent literacy strategy for the school;

iii. primary headteachers who need to understand the leadership and management implications of the policy we intend to propose; and

iv. primary school governors who need to understand the

implications of the literacy strategy for their work.

35. Providing high quality, cost effecting training for each of these four groups presents a substantial challenge. We are aware that many primary schools will be cautious about yet another major strategic change affecting their work. However, we believe that, by basing the change on evidence of what works and ensuring that the training is of the highest possible quality, we will be providing them with the incentive to participate enthusiastically in the training and to change their practice. A further incentive will be provided by the fact that the training will be based on what successful primary teachers are already doing and that, at the national level, the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Group will involve successful practitioners. We have consciously timed the main drive to retrain primary teachers during the National Year of Reading. Instead of finding themselves the beleaguered targets of public criticism, we hope primary teachers will come to see themselves as playing a leading part in a major social transformation.

c) The Professional Development Strategy

36. The professional development strategy we wish to put forward is designed to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the recent budget and White Paper. In addition, we have listened carefully to those who have commented on the proposals in our interim report. We have refined them to ensure that the strategy is both viable and, above all, targeted at those schools with greatest need.

37. The improvement in literacy standards that we are seeking will not come solely from the professional development strategy. The successful implementation of the strategy depends on the schools themselves and their own school improvement strategies. To achieve their goals they will need appropriate support and pressure from both within and outside the education service, and the effective management of the strategy by the DfEE and LEAs.

38. To reach the Government's national target for 2002 will require improvements in children's attainment from all schools. However, this does not mean that all schools will be able to reach the 80% threshold by 2002. Those schools which are already close to, or even exceeding, the average target will be expected to set targets well above that. Others will understandably start from a much lower base and, despite making good progress, may still fall short of the target level. These schools and their local authorities will need to identify what the barriers are to reaching the national target and how, in time, they might be overcome.

39. Our proposal, outlined below, offers schools a core entitlement to train and support the teaching of literacy. The programme will commence in the summer of 1998 and will be linked to the National Year of Reading to which we hope LEAs and schools will offer their support. LEAs will be able to target additional training and support to schools which are striving to improve standards but still have relatively low attainment in literacy, as well as the small minority of schools that are weak or significantly under-performing. These schools will be given first priority but every school will be offered significant support to enable them to contribute to meeting the national literacy target for 2002.

The Government's role

40. The government has stated clearly that the national literacy and numeracy targets for 2002 are an absolute priority. It has signalled that the government, LEAs, schools and parents have a joint responsibility for ensuring that the literacy and numeracy goals are met. This partnership will include practical strategies for supporting LEAs and schools in a professional development programme for teachers. This support will be provided in a specific GEST funded literacy programme and will include:

i. the employment of some 200 or more LEA consultants to carry out literacy training and to support professional development in schools;

ii. training for literacy consultants and their line managers;

iii. training for headteachers, school literacy co-ordinators and dedicated literacy governors covering, amongst other things, the timetabling and managing of a literacy hour;

iv. the commissioning of distance learning materials on the teaching of literacy to support LEAs' and schools' INSET work;

v. support to schools to invest in resources, for example "big books" and multiple copies of books for shared reading;

vi. intensive training and support for schools which need it, to allow headteachers, literacy co-ordinators and other key members of staff to attend training covering planning, classroom organisation, and teaching methods;

vii. more non-contact time for literacy co-ordinators, to disseminate work to other members of staff in schools requiring additonal support;

viii. the training of classroom assistants to Specialist Teacher Assistant (STA) status to support reading and literacy in schools; and

ix. the continuation of the NLP in those areas where it is already established.

41. The local consultants recruited by LEAs will need to be of the highest calibre. Their training will require careful management and delivery to ensure consistency. This training will be carried out nationally by professional staff attached to the SEU. The consultants' main role will be to improve literacy teaching skills in schools particularly those targeted for intensive support.

The School's role

42. We expect all primary schools to commit themselves to raising standards in literacy, even those which are already achieving the national literacy target. Our strategy is designed to help all schools but to offer intensive support to those schools which, for reasons of social disadvantage or historic under-performance, have farthest to go.

43. If we are to achieve the target set for 2002, schools will need to make a commitment to:

i. set literacy targets agreed with their LEA and in line with the LEA's targets for schools;

ii. timetable a daily, dedicated, literacy hour;

iii. produce a school literacy action plan for the next two years, and agree it with governors, parents and the LEA;

iv. produce detailed and practical schemes of work for literacy in line with the NC requirements for literacy, and comparable to that used in the NLP in terms of range, balance, coverage and progression of teaching objectives set down in its framework document; and

v. dedicate 3 INSET days to quality staff training in the

1998/99 academic year, and at least one additional day to literacy in subsequent years.

44. We propose that LEAs run local training conferences for heads, governors who are prepared to take specific responsibility for literacy issues, and a key teacher from each primary school in the Summer of 1998. The conferences should cover the management of literacy, the implementation of the literacy hour, and setting priorities for staff training and the literacy curriculum. These will be followed by the implementation of modular training programmes focusing on the needs identified by the LEAs' and the schools' action plans.

45. The Standards and Effectiveness Unit will commission distance learning materials to support the LEAs' and schools' local training initiatives. These materials will cover seven modular units of training on the following themes:

    i. the management of literacy at school level;

    ii. organisation and structure of a dedicated hour for literacy;

    iii. teaching of reading and writing to classes and groups at Key Stage 1;

    iv. teaching of reading and writing to classes and groups at Key Stage 2, including fiction and poetry;

    v. reading and writing for information at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2;

    vi. phonics, spelling and vocabulary at Key Stage 1; and

    vii. words and sentence work at Key Stage 2.

46. It is our intention that in 1998/99 academic year every primary school should:

    - send the head, a governor, and a key teacher to attend a 2 day training conference run by the LEA introducing the NLP framework and the management of literacy (covering target setting, action planning, implementation and monitoring);

    - use its first INSET day designated for literacy to plan the introduction of a dedicated literacy hour, which should be introduced in the autumn term;

    - draw up a literacy action plan which addresses the following:

        i. an implementation programme for its literacy strategy;

        ii. how the school will implement the literacy hour;

        iii. literacy targets for the school;

        iv. monitoring arrangements;

        v. staff training;

        vi. resource development;

        vii. schemes of work which are at least comparable to the NLP;

- receive some GEST support delegated to the school to invest in books; and

- devote 2 further INSET days to literacy drawing on the national training materials.

47. In addition, we believe that between 40 and 50 per cent of schools nationally will require more intensive support. These will be schools either serving areas of social disadvantage where attainment is significantly low, or those where performance is relatively poor. We recommend that these schools adopt the structured programme of the National Literacy Project. This will include following the NLP's framework for the planning and teaching of literacy and the prescribed organisation of the literacy hour. The training effort will start in 1998-99 with about 10% of schools. The schools selected will be given direct training and support for about four terms and, each year, more schools will be added so that by the year 2002 all those targeted for additional support will have received it.

48. Typically, those schools which fall within the first cohort of schools to receive 'intensive' support will, in addition to that which is provided for all schools, receive in the 1998/99 academic year the following support:

- 1 day preliminary visit from the LEA consultant and adviser;

- 5 day training course for 2 teachers on planning, classroom organisation and teaching methods;

- 5 days non-contact time for literacy co-ordinator to disseminate work to other staff;

- 1 day INSET support from LEA consultant;

- 5 days of visits from LEA consultant to support work in the classroom;

- 2 in-school training days using prepared training materials; and

- 1 day visit by LEA consultant to evaluate progress and agree follow-up support.

49. Schools which are due to receive intensive support in later years will in 1998/99 take forward the actions listed in paragraph 46. At the time they enter the intensive programme listed in paragraph 48, account will need to be taken of the level of their literacy development and their professional programme may need to be adjusted. The timetable for the intensive support programme is as follows:

	AUTUMN TERM	SPRING TERM	SUMMER TERM
1998	Cohort 1[4] - introduction		
1999		Cohort 1 - implementation	Cohort 1 - implementation Cohort 2 - introduction
1999	Cohort 2 - implementation		
2000		Cohort 2 - implementation	Cohort 2 - implementation Cohort 3 - introduction
2000	Cohort 3 - introduction		

2001		Cohort 3 - implementation	Cohort 3 - implementation Cohort 4 - introduction
2001	Cohort 4 - implementation		
2002		Cohort 4 - implementation	Cohort 4 - implementation

50. The percentage of intensive support schools covered in each cohort will be:

Cohort	Financial Year - in which the cohort starts	Percentage of schools covered nationally
cohort 1	1998-1999	10%
cohort 2	1999-2000	10-15%
cohort 3	2000-2001	10-15%
cohort 4	2001-2002	5-10%

The LEA's role

51. The government's overall standards agenda has given LEAs a vital role. The recently published White Paper, Excellence in schools, defines that role as:

> ". . . to challenge schools to raise standards continuously and to apply pressure where they do not . . . An effective LEA will challenge schools to improve themselves, being ready to intervene where there are problems, but not interfere with those schools that are doing well".
>
> ". . . an effective LEA will:
>
> - challenge schools to raise standards and act as a voice for parents;
> - provide clear performance data that can be readily used by schools;
> - offer educational services to schools which choose to use them;
> - provide focused support to schools which are under-performing;
> - focus their efforts on national priorities such as literacy and numeracy; and
> - work with the DfEE and other LEAs to help celebrate excellence and to spread good practice.
>
> A key element in our strategy will be the requirement for each LEA to prepare an Education Development Plan (EDP), setting out how it intends to promote school improvement and including the performance targets set by its schools in agreement with the LEA. EDPs should be drawn up in discussion with schools and other local partners."

52. These plans will need to give high priority to literacy. The Secretary of State, to whom the plans must be submitted for approval, will be especially concerned to see the cogency and clarity of the literacy element of them in reaching decisions on whether to approve them In addition, inspection of LEAs should give high priority to the quality of the LEA's support for the national literacy strategy.

53. Education Development Plans will be phased in but will not be fully operational in every LEA until April 1999. In the intervening period, we recommend that LEAs submit detailed action plans for raising standards of literacy in their primary schools. These action plans will be agreed with the SEU in the DfEE and the allocation of GEST funding will depend on their efficacy. The action plans must include:

    i. detailed arrangements for setting literacy targets at school and LEA level, linked to the LEA and, in turn, the national targets;

    ii. the structure of management and accountability for literacy improvement work in the LEA;

    iii. arrangements for supporting school action planning;

    iv. arrangements for the line management of locally recruited consultants;

    v. a detailed implementation plan covering a period of at least two years, identifying those schools in need of additional support, when and at what level the support should be provided;

    vi. effective and practical strategies for delivering literacy improvement in weak and failing schools;

    vii. arrangements for monitoring and reporting schools' performance; and

    viii. effective arrangements for co-ordinating other relevant LEA services and initiatives designed to raise levels of literacy in schools and the community, including the National Year of Reading.

54. The most important task for LEAs will be to appoint and make effective use of literacy consultants who will be funded through GEST for up to four years (1998-2002). Their chief responsibility will be to implement the national training programme in their area, focusing especially on those schools which, because of their low attainment, need most assistance.

55. A wide range of LEA-based factors will have an impact on the success of the strategy including, among others:

    i. the priority and support given by the LEA to literacy and the literacy consultants;

    ii. the quality of the consultants' work and their capacity to sustain locally the national literacy strategy;

    iii. the quality of the LEA's services;

    iv. its capacity to work in partnership with schools, colleges, TECs and businesses;

    v. the quality of comparative performance data provided by the LEA; and

vi. the quality of the LEA's preparation for the National Year of Reading and especially its capacity to motivate and involve communities, teachers and parents in the event.

56. The timetable for our professional development strategy is set out in Appendix 3 to this report. The plans reflected in the timetable will be costed in detail but overall represent a cost-effective way of carrying out as rapidly as possible an essential task. The cost of our professional development strategy will be met from within the Grants for Education Support and Training (GEST), and grants to the relevant national agencies, OFSTED, TTA and SCAA.

[4] The recruitment and training of LEA consultants in the summer term of 1998 will mean that the designated period for direct training and support for the first cohort of intensive support schools was limited to 3 terms. However, these schools will be compensated by additional visits from the LEA consultant to support work in the classroom.

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Implications for other aspects of policy

57. Primary schools will only be able to give steady priority to literacy over a number of years if, as the recent White Paper suggests, the literacy strategy is placed at the heart of education policy and remains there for a number of years. This section of the report sets out the implications of the literacy strategy for other important areas of policy.

a) National Curriculum

58. It is a generally held view among primary teachers that the National Curriculum, even following Sir Ron Dearing's review in 1993, is both too broad and too prescriptive, especially in Key Stage 2. There is some evidence that this prevents schools from giving literacy sufficient priority. We share this criticism of the National Curriculum.

59. In the review of the National Curriculum which will enable changes to be in place by the year 2000, the highest possible priority should be given to ensuring that high standards of literacy and numeracy - which compare well with those in other advanced societies - become an entitlement for all pupils. We recommend that the review should help schools give sufficient priority to literacy within the National Curriculum in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. It should consider whether this could be achieved by reducing prescription and increasing discretion over teaching in other subjects.

60. We welcome the government's action in asking SCAA to offer guidance on how schools can give a sharper focus to literacy and numeracy within the existing National Curriculum. We expect the advice SCAA gives will facilitate the ability of primary schools to implement the literacy strategy and that OFSTED will take that advice into account in future inspections of primary schools.

b) National Assessment

61. It is essential that the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2:

    i. test literacy effectively;

    ii. provide detailed information on literacy performance;

    iii. ensure public credibility; and

    iv. are consistent over time.

62. The achievement of these objectives demands that SCAA continues to subject its own test development and marking procedures to external scrutiny and evaluation. If the test system is refined over time we urge that the core measures on which we are basing our target are nevertheless sustained.

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63. The achievement of our objectives will be served by the introduction of baseline assessment for five year olds entering school and by the continuing refinement of Key Stage 1 tests in English. These will enable schools to set individual targets for progress and enable early intervention where problems are identified. This is particularly important in relation to children who have, or might develop, learning difficulties. Also, primary schools will have comparative, value-added and improvement information on which to base targets and other management decisions.

64. SCAA has begun to develop software packages for schools which enable much more sophisticated analyses of pupil performance in National Curriculum tests than has been possible in the past. For example, they make it possible for schools to look at performance in comparison to other schools, and by gender or race, and to analyse performance in different questions on the test. We believe that the provision of such analytical tools is crucial to the achievement of our target. The training in the management of literacy suggested above should include training in the use of these data.

c) Inspection

65. The combination of the OFSTED inspection cycle and the emphasis of the DfEE's Standards and Effectiveness Unit on school improvement should encourage the development of a climate of self-review in schools and a healthy focus on outcomes. We urge that national advice on self-review should, in relation to primary schools, emphasise the importance of the literacy (and numeracy) targets.

66. The OFSTED inspection framework, revised in April 1996, already gives a strong emphasis to the core subjects of the National Curriculum, including English. We recommend that, in the next revision of the inspection framework, it should be modified to ensure that inspectors seek evidence of a whole school strategy for the improvement of literacy standards, including the use of training and promotion of literacy across in the curriculum in both primary and secondary schools. In the meantime, clear guidance should be prepared for inspectors on these issues. As an aspect of literacy, we hope such guidance will include unambiguous advice about library provision.

67. We are also keen to ensure that all those who inspect primary schools are well-informed about the teaching and management of literacy. We recommend that all those involved in the inspection of primary schools should, at their own expense, participate in training on literacy in primary schools to ensure that they understand the details of the proposed strategy.

68. The inspection system will play an essential part in ensuring that the professional development strategy is followed up in every school. OFSTED should examine the impact of the literacy strategy in a substantial representative sample of primary schools in the years 1999-2002.

d) The Framework for Professional Development

69. The Teacher Training Agency is developing and piloting the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). We welcome the NPQH and the government's intention to require all aspiring headteachers to hold a professional qualification in the future. We recommend that an explicit requirement of that qualification should be assessment and, where necessary, training for all aspiring headteachers, secondary as well as primary, in the management of literacy. We would urge that priority is given to the training of literacy co-ordinators in primary schools.

e) The Basic Skills Agency

70. The Basic Skills Agency is currently developing a Basic Skills

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Quality Mark for primary schools. It has been developed in consultation with other government agencies, LEAs and teachers' representatives. In its present form, it recognises "the ability to read, write and speak in English and use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general." We recommend that the Quality Mark has separate recognition for literacy and numeracy.

71. We fully endorse the ten criteria listed below which the BSA have established for schools which want to gain the quality mark and which are consistent with the strategy we are developing. We understand that there has been some further work carried out on the framework to ensure that the criteria line up closely with those found within OFSTED's inspection framework. We urge that this work is completed.

1. A whole school action plan to improve performance in basic skills.
2. An assessment of pupil performance in basic skills in the school.
3. A target for the continuous improvement of the school's performance in basic skills.
4. A basic skills improvement plan for pupils under-attaining in the school.
5. Regular review of the progress made by each pupil under-attaining in basic skills.
6. A commitment to improving the skills of staff in the school to teach and extend basic skills.
7. The use of appropriate teaching styles and approaches to improve basic skills.
8. The use of appropriate teaching and learning materials to improve basic skills.
9. The involvement of parents in developing their children's basic skills.
10. An effective method for monitoring the action plan and assessing improvement in performance in basic skills.

72. In our interim report we urged the BSA to develop clear national standards for assessing whether schools meet these ten criteria. We are pleased to report that BSA have agreed with the SEU and OFSTED that they will develop national assessment criteria over the summer period. We recommend that BSA and OFSTED explore the possibility of successful inspection becoming a route to the achievement of the Quality Mark.

f) Reading Recovery

73. Reading Recovery works by enabling teachers to diagnose reading difficulties among six year olds and providing them with targeted one-to-one support to enable them to catch up with their peers before they fall irrevocably behind. The evidence suggests that any remedial approach introduced once a child is eight or more is likely to be both much less effective and much more costly.

74. The Reading Recovery scheme - based on the work of the New Zealander Marie Clay - was introduced in this country with cross-party support in 1992. In 1995, the previous government withdrew funding for the scheme, partly on the grounds that, per pupil, it appeared to be prohibitively expensive. Yet the evaluations of its

impact - the most recent one published in December 1996 - suggest that, for those pupils who have fallen behind their peers at age six, it has been successful in bringing about pupil progress. For example, four out of every five pupils involved in 1996 successfully caught up with their peers. This British finding is consistent with international evidence on its impact. The programme has also improved diagnostic and teaching skills among the staff involved. Twenty-eight LEAs working with the Reading Recovery National Network based at the Institute of Education, London have continued to support Reading Recovery even after the withdrawal of central government funding, because of this proven beneficial impact.

75. The strategic problem between 1992 and 1995 was that Reading Recovery was introduced independently of any coherent attempt to ensure that the vast majority of children learnt to read quickly and effectively through being taught in the best possible way. In New Zealand, the assumption is that 80 per cent of pupils will learn to read first time through the normal teaching programme - the so-called first wave - with Reading Recovery picking up over three-quarters of the remainder in the second wave.

76. As our strategy is implemented, we see Reading Recovery playing the part it was designed to play in New Zealand, namely addressing the specific reading difficulties of those who, in spite of being taught well, fall behind. In its proper strategic place, it could play a vital part in dealing with pupils with special educational needs. Nevertheless, it is expensive to manage and implement. There is a powerful case for investing in Reading Recovery on the grounds that prevention is better than cure. The evidence suggests that it is a sound medium to long term investment. We recommend that Reading Recovery is kept under review with the aim of both refining it over time and seeing if its outcomes can be achieved more cost effectively through, for example, more systematic use of the staff and volunteers already working in many primary schools. If this is to be done, it is important that the existing network and infrastructure are maintained. Given the many pressures on education expenditure, however, we recognise that a major development of Reading Recovery is unlikely to be achievable until the first two years of our proposed strategy have been implemented.

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Children with special educational needs

77. We welcome the White Paper's proposals that less emphasis should be placed on the processes leading to a 'statement' of SEN, and that there should be more emphasis on preventive and remedial action. We agree that the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice provides a framework for identifying and assessing special needs. We urge that the National Advisory Group on SEN, set up to advise on the content of the proposed Green Paper, which the government will publish in September, recommends that the literacy needs for children with special educational needs are explicitly covered in individual education plans (IEP).

78. We believe that the introduction of schemes for baseline assessment, developed according to the differing needs of LEAs and schools across the country, should help in identifying those children in need of early intervention, thereby reducing the number of children who are placed unnecessarily on the SEN Code of Practice at a later stage. We recommend that the strategies adopted by the school to identify children in need of early intervention should be outlined in the SEN policy for each school, alongside the strategies for meeting the needs of children identified within the second and third wave. The stages should match those identified by the school within the Code of Practice to avoid unnecessary workload and duplication. The SEN Code of Practice should be amended accordingly to include specific references to literacy and numeracy. Local Education Authorities should retain specific responsibilities for monitoring school level developments.

79. We support the recommendations contained within the SEN Code of Practice that "provision for pupils with special educational needs is a matter for the school as a whole" with clear responsibilities for the governing body, the headteacher, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and all the teaching and non-teaching staff. We recommend that specific attention is given to the implications of the target for children with special needs within the programme of professional development for governing bodies and school staff as outlined earlier. We acknowledge the crucial role of each school's SENCO in developing positive attitudes among parents and individual children and within the school management and staff that children can achieve the target. We acknowledge the need to change attitudes towards the achievements of children with special educational needs. The TTA's draft standards for SENCOs are a welcome contribution to this overall aim. We believe the place of the SENCO in the school needs to be an aspect of the professional development strategy and recognition outlined above.

80. We acknowledge the crucial role of parents and the importance of taking into account the wishes of the child wherever possible. As Success for All in the USA has demonstrated, the involvement of parents in the education of their own children helps to deal with a variety of issues relating to special educational needs which affect literacy achievement, such as regular school attendance and punctuality, behaviour and health problems, as detailed in the following section. Close co-operation and the development of family literacy is, however, particularly important for children with

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special educational needs. We recommend that strategies are developed, particularly through the professional development programme, to enable parents and schools to work together more closely in supporting the literacy achievements of children with special educational needs.

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Parental responsibilities

81. Parents have a vital role in supporting and encouraging children's learning, perhaps most of all in helping their child learn to read. Attitudes to literacy in the community as a whole are also crucial. The National Year of Reading will help to draw attention to these roles. If our literacy strategy is to succeed, then a key element of it must focus on enlisting parents and other adults and enabling them to play their full part in it. Almost all parents are desperately keen to see their child learn to read. We expect that many will be enthusiastically supportive of our strategy and keen to play their part in realising it. We make a number of proposals to enhance the role of parents in helping their child learn to read from birth through to his/her completion of primary education.

82. The learning a child does between birth and age three or four is known to be extremely important, particularly in the acquisition of language. Children who are read to regularly, hear stories, learn nursery rhymes, look at books, visit libraries and so on are much more likely to learn to read easily. We have been impressed by the work done in Birmingham Local Education Authority to encourage parents to provide these opportunities for young children.

83. We believe there are a number of strategies the government could follow which would emulate at national level what Birmingham and others have done locally. These include:

    i. finding cost effective means of getting advice to parents via the health visitor network and doctors' surgeries;

    ii. urging businesses that are in regular contact with parents - banks, department stores and supermarkets, for example - to participate in promoting the importance of reading. At busy times supermarkets, for example, could employ staff to provide entertaining reading-related activities for small children while their parents shopped in peace; and

    iii. a high profile media campaign encouraging parents to support their children's reading. Discussions with major broadcasting organisations and with those companies who use television and radio advertising extensively should begin as soon as possible.

84. We believe the National Year of Reading, which we describe below, will provide a good stimulus to such activity but recognise that the kind of campaign we have in mind needs to be sustained over a longer period. It will provide a positive and constructive climate in which to press ahead with school reform.

85. On its own, however, a campaign of this kind will not be enough. There needs in addition to be a systematic approach to linking home and school. The government is committed already to introducing home-school contracts, as proposed in the White Paper, *Excellence in schools*. At primary level, we believe these must emphasise not only attendance, punctuality, good behaviour and the school's responsibilities but also the potential of work at

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home to support a child in learning to read. They should be introduced and discussed at parents' meetings, which ideally should take place at least twice a year. The ultimate goal is the establishment of clear targets for the improvement of each child's progress over a six month period, with both parents and school being clear about what their respective responsibilities are in ensuring the target is met. We believe that support for and the improvement of reading among all children, especially those with special educational needs in mainstream schools, will be greatly assisted by this approach.

86. In relation to reading, very often the best homework is simply for the parent or someone else from home to spend 20 minutes or so each day either reading to their child or hearing him or her read. This is important not only while the child is learning to read but also once the child can read, so that his/her fluency is improved and range extended. This would not generate marking for teachers, nor place an intolerable burden on the vast majority of parents. National guidance from the DfEE on home-school contracts and homework should encourage reading to be treated as an integral part of a child's homework in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

87. We have seen the documentation produced by Greenwood Junior School and its partners in an inner city school improvement project in Nottingham. The model of 'home study' developed there appears to have been highly successful, not least because, in addition to being educationally sound, it is eminently practical. The homework tasks have been designed to link with the National Curriculum. They are constructed so that they do not generate extensive marking which could overwhelm already heavily burdened teachers. The school recommends four home study sessions a week. We recommend that the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Group examines the production of home study guidance, drawing on the experience of Greenwood and other forward-thinking primary schools. The distance learning training materials should recommend home study as part of their approach to improving literacy standards, and should highlight the role of public libraries in providing resources, space and staff to support children's home study needs.

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Family literacy

88. The involvement of parents in helping children learn to read is predicated on the notion that parents themselves are literate. Given levels of adult illiteracy, this is not always the case. There is therefore a need to link efforts to improve literacy among adults to our proposals for improving reading standards in primary schools. Much of this lies outside our terms of reference. We do wish, however, to draw attention to the success of the Basic Skills Agency's Demonstration Projects in Family Literacy. There were four programmes based in areas of multiple deprivation in Cardiff, Liverpool, Norfolk and North Tyneside. Each provided courses which lasted 96 hours over 12 weeks, and involved children aged three to six and their parents (96 per cent of participating parents were mothers). On entry, the parents had low levels of literacy, and many of their children were severely disadvantaged for learning by low development in vocabulary and in emergent reading and writing. Parents worked on their own literacy, built on home literacy activities and learned how to extend the help they gave their children. Meanwhile, the children were given intensive early years teaching, with a strong emphasis on writing and talking as well as reading. There were also joint sessions in which the parents worked with their children and used the strategies they had been taught for helping them.

89. The evaluation of these by the NFER published in 1996 found that the children made greater-than-expected average improvements in vocabulary and reading during the courses and in the 12 weeks after them, while in writing they also made substantial gains. For example, the proportion whose lack of vocabulary would leave them severely disadvantaged for learning fell from 17 per cent to 6 per cent, while the standardised mean score for reading rose from 84 to 92, where 100 was the average.

90. In addition, both the literacy levels and the ability of parents to help their children to read were boosted. There were substantial increases in literacy-related home activities, and these became firmly embedded in family practice. Parents also reported substantial increases in their ability to help their children with language and literacy and in their confidence in doing so.

91. All the evidence therefore suggests that family literacy is both beneficial and cost effective.

92. Following the success of the pilot schemes, 265 additional family literacy projects have been funded in 63 LEAs in 1997-1998. We welcome this expansion. We recommend that the government sees family literacy as a central part of its approach to raising reading standards in disadvantaged areas and provides continuing and, if possible, extended support for these projects.

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Literacy for bilingual learners

93. The issues covered in this report have implications for the teaching of bilingual pupils who are not, of course, an homogeneous group. In some cases, they are from families long established in this country who are very familiar with English and with English schools; others may be the first generation to attend school and in some cases also the first to develop literacy in both languages. For bilingual learners, fluent literacy in English takes time to learn, but we believe that it is right to expect that most pupils with full experience of primary education in English can reach the Level 4 target in reading and writing by age eleven. Children who have arrived recently from abroad may need longer to reach the target with a special programme planned by the school.

94. In either case, we believe that our overall proposals will facilitate their acquisition of literacy. The emphasis in the proposals on maintaining the direct teaching of skills and strategies through to the end of Key Stage 2, on individual target setting and home-school collaboration are likely to be of particular benefit.

95. Successful work over a number of years points to the characteristics of effective provision for bilingual learners. In the best practice:

i. issues about teaching of bilingual pupils are thoroughly explored and integrated within general school policies;

ii. the contribution of support staff, whether teachers or teaching assistants, is well managed;

iii. a careful analysis is made of the language demands of the curriculum and of how bilingual learners at different stages can be helped to meet them;

iv. there is particular attention to the links between learning of the spoken and written language;

v. close attention is given to reading for meaning and on models of written language for more advanced learners; and

vi. additional resources such as visual aids, talking books and dual language materials are intelligently used.

96. We intend that the distance learning materials for school staff and governors which we are proposing will reflect this successful experience. Also, we expect that the training of teaching assistants, referred to elsewhere in this report, will encompass those who work particularly with bilingual learners.

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The National Year of Reading

97. The bulk of our report concentrates on reforming the education service so that primary schools and teachers are better equipped to teach literacy effectively and parents are enabled to play their part in supporting a child's reading and writing.

98. We have made it clear that we are convinced that, for our strategy to succeed, it is necessary for the whole society to assist teachers and parents in their respective tasks. If there were a national sense of everyone, both inside and outside education, working together to raise literacy standards it would help to transform expectations and ensure that primary teachers, instead of feeling they were the targets of society's criticism, felt rather that they were part of a wider movement.

99. For these reasons, in addition to recommending changes to the education service, we make proposals designed to turn the cultural tide so that teachers and schools feel they are swimming with it. The National Year of Reading - originally proposed by David Blunkett in his speech to the 1996 National Association of Headteachers' (NAHT) conference - is central to our plans for achieving this objective.

100. The school year 1998/9 will be designated 'The National Year of Reading'. Along with the changes we plan in the education service in that year, we hope there will be a huge media campaign and a series of events aimed at urging:

i. parents to support schools in their efforts to raise reading standards

- for example, every company or organisation could urge those of its employees who are also parents to read with their children. Some might give employees half a day off for this purpose during the year;
- there could be a nation-wide appeal for volunteers to help reading. In Tower Hamlets, over 200 business people read with primary school children on a regular basis and companies have offered a further 400 such mentors since a Newsroom South East item in January 1997.
- organisations such as Volunteer Reading Help should find and train adults who want to help children with their reading.

ii. adults with poor literacy skills to try to improve them

- the Basic Skills Agency could link up with television - as it has done in the past - to promote adult and family literacy;

iii. the media to recognise their influence and to seek imaginative means of encouraging children and young

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people to read and parents and other adults to support them in doing so

- television schedules could include both short "advertising" slots and longer programmes urging parents to support children's reading and showing them how;

iv. publishers and booksellers to contribute to the campaign to raise reading standards, not least because it will clearly be in their commercial interests to do so

- publishers and booksellers could organise events in schools and libraries, sponsor television productions and produce advice for schools on book-buying;

v. business and voluntary organisations to play a part through, for example, partnerships with the public sector

- businesses could vary advertisements from time to time to promote reading (e.g. BT: "It's good to read");

- existing business mentoring schemes could be extended; and

- supermarkets could promote reading among customers and provide literacy events on site for children while parents shop in peace.

vi. the experience of public library services to be drawn upon in promoting reading in communities.

101. To work, the National Year of Reading needs to achieve a very high profile indeed. Its goal must be to engage the interest of every single citizen and the activity of many millions. Our interim report indicated great enthusiasm for the National Year of Reading among publishers, booksellers and librarians. WH Smith, Britain's leading bookseller, expressed keen interest as did several publishers including Macmillan and Random House, as well as the public relations agency Colman Getty, which publicises the Booker Prize, among other things. The Library Association has expressed strong support. Since the election these organisations have re-affirmed their willingness to contribute to such an important initiative and have been joined by others like the BBC, Mersey TV Ltd, the Times Educational Supplement, Walkers Snacks and the Post Office in early planning meetings on the National Year of Reading. This confirms our view that the climate is right to promote what we envisage will be an innovative and exciting example of public-private partnership related to a national priority.

102. If it is to take place in 1998/9, then planning needs to proceed rapidly. Work has already begun. The Standards and Effectiveness Unit has set this as one of its main priorities. It has established a team dedicated to taking plans forward. An advisory group of high level representatives of key interests is being put into place.

103. We hope that the gains made in the year will be sustained and that the National Literacy Trust, the Basic Skills Agency, the Library Association, the Book Trust and other organisations will prepare in advance to build upon it well into the next millennium.

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Summer literacy schools

104. We believe the strategy we have outlined in this report so far is comprehensive, ambitious and likely to make a substantial impact on literacy standards. However, we recognise that, even if the strategy proved entirely successful in meeting our long-term target, there would be children in the short term who reach the end of primary education without the literacy skills necessary to take advantage of secondary education.

105. For this reason, David Blunkett proposed in 1996 that a Labour government would introduce Summer Literacy Schools available to Year 6 children whose reading level was below Level 4. Their purpose would be to give a boost to these children's reading performance before they started secondary school. He announced that resources would be made available for this purpose.

106. On 30 May the government announced the first 29 Summer Literacy Schools for the summer of 1997. This pilot programme was widened to 50 Summer Literacy Schools as a result of a generous donation from News International and additional support from the following businesses: ABLAC Learning Works, Autodesk, Cameron Macintosh Ltd, Alton Towers, Owie Wowie Ltd, Channel Four Schools, Trutex Ltd, and WH Smith. This partnership between the government, education establishments, and the private sector has ensured that some 1,580 Year 6 pupils were given the opportunity to improve their literacy skills prior to entry into secondary education in the Autumn of 1997.

107. The pilot schemes will be evaluated and a good practice report produced. All the children in the scheme have been pre- and post-tested to enable rigorous evaluation. In addition, LEAs and - through them - other Departments within local authorities will need to provide information about their current activities and their views and experiences as to what constitutes good practice. We recommend that this evidence is used to:

i. develop a number of models of Summer Literacy School support which have been demonstrated to work;

ii. invite proposals to run GEST funded schemes in 1998 according to the established criteria; and

iii. develop a national scheme which could include a variety of approaches to be launched and delivered in 1999 during the National Year of Reading.

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Appendix 1: Key Stage 2 English

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Summer literacy schools

104. We believe the strategy we have outlined in this report so far is comprehensive, ambitious and likely to make a substantial impact on literacy standards. However, we recognise that, even if the strategy proved entirely successful in meeting our long-term target, there would be children in the short term who reach the end of primary education without the literacy skills necessary to take advantage of secondary education.

105. For this reason, David Blunkett proposed in 1996 that a Labour government would introduce Summer Literacy Schools available to Year 6 children whose reading level was below Level 4. Their purpose would be to give a boost to these children's reading performance before they started secondary school. He announced that resources would be made available for this purpose.

106. On 30 May the government announced the first 29 Summer Literacy Schools for the summer of 1997. This pilot programme was widened to 50 Summer Literacy Schools as a result of a generous donation from News International and additional support from the following businesses: ABLAC Learning Works, Autodesk, Cameron Macintosh Ltd, Alton Towers, Owie Wowie Ltd, Channel Four Schools, Trutex Ltd, and WH Smith. This partnership between the government, education establishments, and the private sector has ensured that some 1,580 Year 6 pupils were given the opportunity to improve their literacy skills prior to entry into secondary education in the Autumn of 1997.

107. The pilot schemes will be evaluated and a good practice report produced. All the children in the scheme have been pre- and post-tested to enable rigorous evaluation. In addition, LEAs and - through them - other Departments within local authorities will need to provide information about their current activities and their views and experiences as to what constitutes good practice. We recommend that this evidence is used to:

i. develop a number of models of Summer Literacy School support which have been demonstrated to work;

ii. invite proposals to run GEST funded schemes in 1998 according to the established criteria; and

iii. develop a national scheme which could include a variety of approaches to be launched and delivered in 1999 during the National Year of Reading.

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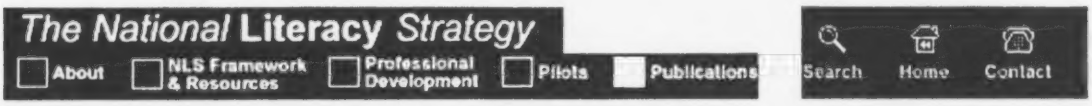

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108. Our chief focus, given the nature of our target, has been on primary education. However, we are aware that literacy is a major issue for secondary schools, especially in the years before the national literacy target is met.

109. In the short term, some secondary schools are faced with substantial numbers of pupils who join them with inadequate literacy skills. These pupils, often but by no means only boys, face considerable difficulties immediately. Many simply never catch up as the demands of the curriculum increase, and some are at risk of becoming disaffected and disruptive. In the longer run there will be far fewer such pupils and the very considerable costs of meeting their needs should diminish. In the meantime secondary schools will need to continue to work to secure minimum standards among pupils in Year 7.

110. But this is only a part of the story. Secondary school subjects make new demands on literacy and all pupils need to be taught how to meet them. It is important for secondary schools to build on the efforts of primary schools and work consistently across the curriculum to ensure that all pupils leave school confident in their understanding and use of written language.

111. We have considered whether it would be appropriate to set national targets for literacy in secondary schools. On balance we have concluded that it is not necessary at this stage. A national target for performance in literacy at the end of Key Stage 3 could be worthwhile in the future, in the light of progress made towards the target at age 11. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Group will consider whether there should be such a target and what it might be. But, while additional national targets may not be necessary at this stage, improvement is nevertheless vital.

112. Every secondary school should specialise in literacy and set targets for improvement in English. Similarly, every teacher should contribute to promoting it. The principles for the management of literacy set out earlier apply as much to secondary schools as to primary schools. In shaping their plans it is essential that secondary schools do not see work on reading and writing as exclusively the province of a few teachers in the English and learning support departments.

113. There are schools where this message has long been appreciated and acted upon. But there are also strong signs that in others the issue has been neglected, with decreasing use of reading as a means of learning and only haphazard efforts to focus on improving writing in the relevant subjects. In this respect schools have not been helped by the design of the National Curriculum, which gives inadequate attention to teaching the skills of reading and writing within subject disciplines and, in some cases, by the relatively limited expectations for the use of reading and writing set by GCSE syllabuses and examinations. Not enough has been done to inspire and support the comprehensive development work which is necessary on literacy in secondary schools. One exception is the work of the Extending Literacy Project (EXEL),

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based at the University of Exeter.

114. We recommend that the SEU should seek to identify and disseminate what active measures successful secondary schools take to improve literacy standards, for all pupils, but particularly for those whose literacy levels on entry are low. It should be built on the study planned by OFSTED to find evidence of where and how comprehensive, deliberate and intensive approaches work. We recommend that OFSTED's study should include an analysis of:

i. the problems which the survey schools are facing and the costs of meeting them;

ii. the account taken by secondary schools of Key Stage 2 test data and the means by which assessments of attainment on entry are made;

iii. how much and what kind of reading and writing, in class and at home, is being done in a range of subjects;

iv. expenditure on books and the quantity and quality of books available;

v. the characteristics of good direct teaching of reading and writing in key subjects;

vi. the effectiveness of work by special educational needs and language support teams;

vii. the use of specific interventions such as paired reading, volunteer tutoring and after-school activities;

viii. what is done to promote independent reading for pleasure and information, including effective steps taken to encourage boys in particular;

ix. the use made of school and public libraries; and

x. the contribution to literacy made by the use of information and communication technology.

115. On the basis of this investigation of good practice, we recommend that a small-scale GEST funded development programme on the lines of the National Literacy Project for primary schools is established to help secondary schools to improve literacy. The programme needs to have two strands. The first should deal with low standards of literacy at Key Stage 3 and be addressed primarily to English teachers and special educational needs and language support staff. The second should be concerned with the teaching of literacy within subjects throughout secondary schools. Both should be underpinned by a clear statement about the basis for effective teaching.

116. The training materials should be designed to connect closely with the programme for primary schools described earlier. We hope that they can be produced by September 1998 for trial with schools participating in the development programme to be run by the National Literacy Project, and then made available for wider use. Training should start with key staff, including support staff, in secondary schools where standards of literacy are well below Level 4 among a high proportion of the intake.

117. To extend this training effort we recommend that the TTA should:

i. make a unit on the teaching of reading and writing a requirement of secondary teacher training in subjects where effective use of these skills is essential; and

ii. focus on literacy within the framework for professional development and identify associated criteria for courses in the medium term.

118. As some schools now demonstrate, distinct improvement in pupils' attainment in reading and writing is possible within the context of a ten subject National Curriculum at Key Stage 3. However, in relation to the revision of the National Curriculum, we recommend that SCAA should consider the case for ensuring that:

i. explicit and systematic attention to the skills of reading and writing becomes a feature of the programmes of study in relevant subjects; and

ii. schools where there is an evident need are able to concentrate intensively on improving literacy in Year 7.

119. Because it is vitally important to ensure that there is continuity between primary and secondary schools in the efforts to improve literacy, we recommend that in their strategy for literacy, local education authorities give deliberate attention to creating and maintaining co-operation between secondary schools and their feeder primary schools.

120. An essential focus for co-operation is the transfer and use of detailed information, on a consistent basis, about pupils' attainment. This is not a one-way process: it is important for example, that primary and middle schools receive feedback on the progress made by pupils in secondary schools. We know that liaison between phases can be difficult in areas where the pattern of transfer is complex, but we also know of successful efforts to overcome these difficulties, which include joint use of school training days and detailed discussion between special educational needs co-ordinators. At the heart of good liaison lies mutual respect for the efforts of teachers in the different phases, openness in the discussion of success and failure, and willingness to agree and maintain particular steps to improve rates of progress. We believe that the National Year of Reading would provide an ideal opportunity to make a commitment to better co-operation manifest in practice through specific local plans.

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The process

121. In the foregoing sections, we have set out a detailed and comprehensive strategy for the years 1997-2002. Broadly, the plans we have described would form the work of the full term of a government. We are confident that, if this first phase of the strategy is adhered to, it will dramatically raise literacy standards and the government's national target for 2002 will be met.

122. However, we also recognise that, if we are to reach our ultimate target and sustain it, and if we are to ensure that secondary and tertiary education build systematically on the foundations laid by primary schools, then the drive for improved literacy standards will need a second phase.

123. Clearly, it would be foolish to be too prescriptive at this stage about a policy strategy to be pursued in the early years of the next century. It is essential that in thinking that far ahead we are flexible and in a position to build on a thorough evaluation of the first phase of the strategy.

124. We are, however, in a position to set out the process through which phase two of the strategy will emerge. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Group, which we have recommended should oversee the first phase of the strategy should, from the start, have in mind the need to prepare for the longer term future.

125. This perspective should inform its monitoring and evaluation of the first phase of the strategy. It should seek constantly to gather data, information and ideas for the second phase. The evidence gathered by OFSTED and major research projects will be of particular importance, as will evaluations of the impact of the NLP. In order to keep close to teacher and parental opinion on the effect of the strategy, the Group ought also to use focus groups and other polling techniques periodically. Above all, the Group needs to develop and sustain good links with similar strategic approaches to literacy in other countries. We believe that, increasingly, such international cross-fertilisation can make a vital contribution both in providing ideas and approaches and in ensuring that standards here match the best in the world.

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Likely features

126. We anticipate that the second phase of the strategy will involve some or all of the following features:

i. building on the ICT training for teachers available through funding from the People's Lottery to enhance their teaching of literacy skills;

ii. taking full advantage of the high quality educational materials to be provided through the National Grid for Learning to promote effective literacy teaching;

iii. improving the diagnostic and pedagogical skills of teachers in relation to pupils with various specific reading difficulties;

iv. building on the experience of the first phase of the strategy to enhance home-school links;

v. building on the experience of the first phase of the strategy to make greater and more effective use of trained classroom assistants;

vi. continuing to improve links between primary and secondary schools on literacy;

vii. enhancing the capability of all primary teachers to assess children, to analyse data from assessment and apply it in the teaching process; and

viii. building on the growing capacity of primary schools to improve themselves, which should result from the implementation of the policies set out in the recent White Paper, Excellence in schools.

127. From these strands, we anticipate the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Group will be in a position by around 1999-2000 to set out in some detail the strategy to be pursued in the years 2002-2006. We expect this will be consistent with and supportive of the strategy for improving literacy at secondary level, which we would expect to be in place by then.

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Attainment target 1: speaking and listening

Pupils talk and listen with confidence in an increasing range of contexts. Their talk is adapted to the purpose: developing ideas thoughtfully, describing events and conveying their opinions clearly. In discussion, they listen carefully, making contributions and asking questions that are responsive to others' ideas and views. They use appropriately some of the features of standard English vocabulary and grammar.

Attainment target 2: reading

In responding to a range of texts, pupils show understanding of significant ideas, themes, events and characters, beginning to use inference and deduction. They refer to the text when explaining their views. They locate and use ideas and information.

Attainment target 3: writing

Pupils' writing in a range of forms is lively and thoughtful. Ideas are often sustained and developed in interesting ways and organised appropriately for the purpose and the reader. Vocabulary choices are often adventurous and words are used for effect. Pupils are beginning to use grammatically complex sentences, extending meaning. Spelling, including that of polysyllabic words that conform to regular patterns, is generally accurate. Full stops, capital letters and question marks are used correctly, and pupils are beginning to use punctuation within the sentence. Handwriting style is fluent, joined and legible.

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Background

The National Literacy Project was set up by the DfEE in September 1996. Other partners who share in the Project's management are OFSTED, SCAA, the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) and the Basic Skills Agency (BSA). The Project is funded through GEST at a cost of £12.5 million over five years. It is co-ordinated by a Project Director and based at a newly established national centre at Reading. Linked to the national centre are 14 local centres serving 18 LEAs.

Aims overall

The NLP aims to raise standards of literacy in primary schools in line with national expectations by:

- improving the school's management of literacy through target-setting linked to systematic planning, monitoring and evaluation by headteachers, senior staff and governors;
- setting clear expectations benchmarked in a term-by-term structure; and
- improving the quality of teaching through more focused literacy instruction and effective classroom management.

Specifically, the Project expects to:

- underline the centrality of literacy teaching in the primary curriculum and ensure that schools give it practical and effective priority;
- ensure that school managers can identify needs, set targets for improvement based on pupils' attainment, and use these to monitor and evaluate their school's progress;
- provide a detailed scheme of term-by-term teaching objectives and a common approach to curricular planning;
- make more effective use of time through the introduction of a daily literacy hour in every class;
- develop and promote a range of practical teaching strategies based on whole-class and group teaching;
- secure progression and consistency in teaching methods and classroom organisation from class to class throughout the school;
- provide training and support to build teachers' curricular knowledge and teaching skills;

- provide additional support and training for specialist teacher assistants (STAs);
- give parents confidence that literacy has a high priority in the school and that their children are being thoroughly taught; and
- encourage family and community support for literacy achievement.

Definition

The NLP Framework is based on a broad definition of literacy:

The concept of literacy can be defined very widely. However within the aims and purposes of the National Literacy Project, literacy is defined simply as "the ability to read and write". Literacy is treated as a unitary process with two complementary aspects, reading and writing. This underlines a basic principle of the National Curriculum i.e to develop pupils' skills within an integrated programme and to inter-relate the requirements of the Range, Key Skills and Standard English and Language Study sections of the Programmes of Study. Literate primary children should:

- read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding;
- be interested in books, read with enjoyment and justify preferences;
- know and understand a range of genres in fiction and poetry, and understand and be familiar with some of the ways in which narratives are structured through basic literary ideas of setting, character and plot;
- understand and be able to use a range of non-fiction texts;
- be able to orchestrate a full range of reading cues (phonic, graphic, syntactic, contextual) to monitor and self-correct their own reading;
- plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing;
- have an interest in words and meanings, and a growing vocabulary;
- understand the sound and spelling system and use this to read and spell accurately; and
- have fluent and legible handwriting.

The framework of teaching objectives

The framework has been carefully designed to help teachers interpret the NC Programmes of Study for reading and writing, and to set clear expectations for what should be covered in each term. It covers a full range of fiction and non-fiction work and throughout reading and writing are closely inter-linked. The programme of teaching objectives for each term is set out under three inter-related strands.

word level	phonics, spelling and vocabulary
sentence level	grammar and punctuation
text level	comprehension and composition

It incorporates a model of reading strategy which recognises the need for pupils to learn and be able to co-ordinate skills across all these strands in order to gain confidence and independence early. All classes must teach literacy for one hour per day of continuous, dedicated time. Lessons are planned to meet the term's teaching objectives, though there is scope for

some adjustment to meet the needs of particular classes, especially in the early stages of working to the project, where expectations may be too high and work intended for younger pupils may still need to be covered.

Annex A gives an example of a term's objectives from the NLP Framework for Teaching

The literacy hour

Each class has a daily timetabled hour of dedicated literacy teaching time. The hour is carefully structured to ensure a balance of whole class and differentiated group teaching. During the hour, work will cover class (shared) and group (guided) reading and writing tasks, and the focused teaching of phonics, spelling, vocabulary, handwriting, and grammar. On balance, pupils spend approximately 60% of their time being directly taught and 40% working independently. The literacy hour gives a focus for literacy teaching throughout the school, providing consistency and continuity between classes.

Practical guidance providing detailed examples of teaching tasks and activities, together with advice and training on classroom organisation and teaching methodology is provided through training courses and advisory support. Teachers resource books with banks of ideas and suggestions are also being developed. The common structures of teaching objectives, planning and class organisation enable teachers to plan together and share ideas, at local and national levels. As the work develops, a number of individual teachers and schools are being identified in each LEA to act as models, so that other teachers may visit them or meet them in the course of training. This is a powerful form of dissemination which is becoming increasingly influential in the project.

Annex B sets out the basic structure of the NLP literacy hour

Management of the project

The role of the LEA

The strategy for implementation is a cascade model so every link in the chain needs to be as robust as possible. LEAs are the first link in the chain and the part played by senior staff in promoting, managing and monitoring this work has been central to its success in schools. The most successful LEAs have:

- provided a strong lead to all their schools, profiling literacy as a priority for the LEA with publicity, visible targets, information to parents, briefings to and involvement of elected members etc.;
- have systems for measuring school progress and performance which are used for target-setting, needs identification, action and monitoring;
- worked with the schools to audit their literacy provision, identify needs, set literacy targets and draw up implementation plans;
- drawn together other relevant agencies, providers, local projects etc. (e.g. English as a Second Language and learning support services, libraries, related Single Regeneration Budget initiatives) to ensure that there is a single unambiguous message and that all related provision is co-ordinated and effectively targeted on the work of the NLP;
- provided a literacy centre with resources, training facilities and administrative support;
- ensured that all LEA officers, advisers and inspectors are well briefed on the project and what it entails for schools so that there are no conflicts, mixed messages or confusions in the system;

- ensured that schools most in need of support to improve literacy standards receive it and have effective strategies for dealing with weak schools;
- ensured that headteachers and governors are fully conversant with the requirements of the project by inducting heads and governors thoroughly, spelling out in detail the school's commitment and monitoring each school to ensure that they are meeting it;
- carefully selected, inducted and trained literacy consultants (advisory teachers) to ensure that they have the requisite skills to support schools effectively;
- provided line management and support for consultants from a specialist member of their inspection/advisory service to lead and monitor their work and to provide responsive and effective lines of communication about the progress of individual schools;
- have back-up and reporting strategies to support the consultants, so that their work is properly monitored, with effective feedback to others in the system on school progress; and
- taken a pro-active and positive attitude, up to and including CEO level, by encouraging, recognising, publicising and building on success.

School management

Management of the literacy curriculum by heads and senior staff is a necessary condition of success. The NLP is structured to make the work manageable and very high priority is given to preparation and implementation strategy. All schools are required to:

- conduct a self-evaluation of their literacy provision;
- set targets for improvement;
- prepare an action plan for implementation;
- implement the literacy hour throughout the school by the end of the first term of project support;
- attend preliminary training conferences with a representative of the governors;
- establish monitoring procedures and follow them through;
- organise a staff training programme;
- plan expenditure on books;
- deploy staff and define roles; and
- conduct an annual review of the work and evaluate the school's progress towards its declared targets.

These expectations provide a structure of accountability and support for schools.

Evaluation

The project is being evaluated at three levels:

- school level - through regular school self-evaluations to assess standards and progress towards the school's own targets and to

evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the work on pupils' achievements;

- LEA level - through annual reports which evaluate standards and progress across the LEA in relation to the factors that influence them; and
- national level - through a programme of objective testing of pupils administered by the National Foundation for Educational Research, and through a separate longitudinal survey of a sample of project schools by Her Majesty's Inspectorate.

Key criteria for success

Overall, the success of the project will be judged by the extent to which it succeeds in:

- significantly improving literacy standards in the participating schools in relation to national expectations, national norms and added value;
- enabling schools to manage, improve and maintain the literacy curriculum through target-setting, careful planning, monitoring and evaluation;
- helping teachers to become more effective, knowledgeable and confident about teaching methods, classroom management and the literacy curriculum;
- identifying factors which account for schools' and teachers' success; and
- disseminating the project's materials and findings nationally to the benefit of other schools.

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■ Annex A - Extract from the NLP Framework for teaching

Annex B - The Literacy Hour

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Annex A - Extract from the NLP Framework for teaching

Year 2 Term 2 pupils should be taught:

Text level work: Comprehension and composition

Fiction and poetry

Range: Traditional stories; stories from other cultures; stories and poems with predictable and patterned language

Read

1. to use the context of reading as a cue, in conjunction with grammatical, word recognition and phonemic cues, to predict texts, check they make sense, identify and correct own reading errors;

2. to discuss and compare story themes;

3. to predict story endings/incidents e.g. from unfinished extracts, while reading with the teacher etc.;

4. through discussion of story settings: to compare differences in place, time, climate etc.; locate key words and phrases in text, consider how different settings influence events and behaviour;

5. to identify and describe characters, expressing own views and using words and phrases from texts;

6. to prepare and re-tell stories individually and through role-play in groups, using dialogue and narrative from text;

7. to read and recite poems, discuss and identify patterns of rhythm and rhyme in different examples, and to identify and collect interesting/favourite words or phrases from poems - read and re-read;

Write

8. to re-present story settings from reading e.g. re-describe, use text extracts, illustrate with captions, labels and arrows, map out scenes etc.;

9. to write character profiles e.g. class books, posters passports etc. Use key words and phrases that describe or are spoken by characters in the text;

10. to use poem structures from reading as a basis for writing, by extending or substituting elements to invent own lines, verses etc.; make class collections, illustrate with captions;

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Related Items

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Non fiction

Range: simple dictionaries and other simple ordered texts

Read

11. to check and revise alphabetic knowledge from previous terms, to use dictionaries to locate words by using initial letters and to explore and check spellings;

12. to understand that dictionaries give definitions - discuss what definitions are, explore some simple definitions and compile own definitions for simple words;

13. to examine a range of other ordered texts e.g. catalogues, directories, listings, registers, indexes, discuss why and how people use them;

Write

14. to make class dictionaries/alphabet books for special interest words e.g. linked to topics, derived from stories, poems etc. Use for vocabulary extension and "sight" word repertoire.

Sentence level work: Grammar and punctuation

1. to use awareness of grammar to decipher new or unfamiliar words e.g. to predict from the text, read on and leave a gap etc.;

2. through reading, to reinforce knowledge of how sentences are marked by capitals and full stops, explore how sentences should be marked through shared writing or proof-reading an unpunctuated passage;

3. to investigate and collect sentences/phrases for story openings and endings - use some of these formal elements in re-telling and story writing;

4. to identify speech marks and exclamation marks in reading, understand their purpose - use the terms correctly;

5. to investigate and recognise a range of other ways of marking texts e.g. speech bubbles, enlarged or italicised print, captions and headings, insert text etc., explore purposes and collect examples;

6. to use speech marks to write dialogue;

7. to investigate and be aware of other uses of capitalisation from reading e.g. names, headings, special emphasis, new lines in poetry etc.;

8. to read aloud with intonation and expression appropriate to the grammar and punctuation (sentences, speech marks, exclamation marks);

9. to understand the need for grammatical agreement - matching verbs to nouns/pronouns correctly e.g. I am; we are etc.;

10. to use verb tenses with increasing accuracy in speaking and writing e.g. catch/caught see/saw, go/went etc. Use past tense consistently for narration;

11. to use capitals and full stops with increasing accuracy to mark sentences in writing;

12. to re-read own writing to check for grammatical sense (coherence) and accuracy (agreement) - identify errors and suggest alternative constructions.

Word level work:
Phonics spelling and vocabulary

Basic work

1. to use phonic and word recognition knowledge as a cue, together with grammatical and contextual knowledge in shared and independent reading, and to tackle unfamiliar words by word building and analogy with known spellings;

2. to practise and use phonemic and word recognition skills from previous terms; and

3. to use the term *phoneme* to refer to the smallest unit of sound in a word;

Specific phonics and spelling

4. through speaking and listening to identify the phonemes: air, or, er by analogy, (i) in rhyming patterns; (ii) unrelated to rhyme;

5. through spelling to: (i) identify and write the common spellings for each phoneme in response to spoken word pictures, objects etc.; (ii) explore sets of words with different spellings of same phoneme; (iii) use in independent writing;

6. through reading to: (i) identify phonemes; (ii) build words from rhyming sets; (iii) build words unrelated by rhyme; (iv) reinforce through word recognition, shared and independent reading and re-reading of patterned stories, rhymes etc.;

7. to identify syllabic patterns in speech, use the term syllable; distinguish between phonemes (sounds), syllables and words;

8. to investigate spelling patterns of regular multi-syllabic words by identifying syllables in speech. Build words from known parts e.g. be/low slipp/er bun/dle using phonemic spelling to build the parts;

Word recognition

9. to read on sight the high frequency words listed in the Framework document;

10. to recognise and spell correctly common verb endings (such as ed, ing);

Vocabulary

11. to collect and list new words from reading, make word banks linked to particular topics (e.g. link to non-fiction reading and work in other subjects); build individual collections of personal interest or significant words - read and re-read;

12. to investigate, collect, classify and use words associated with time e.g. soon, before, as, when, meanwhile;

13. to check out meanings of unfamiliar words use surrounding text to infer meanings; use dictionaries, note, re-read and use new words e.g. build up personal word journals, individual/class glossaries etc.;

Handwriting

14. to practise handwriting in conjunction with spelling (above) and independent writing, ensuring correct letter orientation, formation and proportion in a style that makes them easy to join later.

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http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/literacy/publications/?pub_id=77&art_id=293&top_id=82

Implementation of the NLS: Final Report

Members of the literacy taskforce

Introduction: Implementation of the NLS - Final Report

Summary of recommendations

Section One - The National Literacy Strategy 1997-2002

Section Two - The National Literacy Strategy 2002-2006

Appendix 1: Key Stage 2 English National Curriculum tests: Level 4 description

Appendix 2 - A brief description of the National Literacy Project

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Annex A - Extract from the NLP Framework for teaching
■ Annex B - The Literacy Hour

Appendix 3: National Literacy Strategy: Professional development timetable

Annex B - The Literacy Hour

		KEY STAGE 1	KEY STAGE 2
whole class	approx. 15 mins.	Shared text work (a balance of reading and writing)	Shared text work (a balance of reading and writing)
whole class	approx. 15 mins.	Focused word work	A balance, over the term of focused word work or sentence work
group work	approx. 20 mins.	1. Independent reading, writing or word work activities 2. teacher works with each group twice in the week, focused on guided reading	1. independent reading, writing word and sentence activities 2. teacher works with each group for a sustained period (15 minutes) each week on guided reading or writing
whole class	approx. 10 mins	Reviewing, reflecting upon and presenting work covered in the lesson	reviewing, reflecting upon and presenting work covered in the lesson

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BY WHEN?	WHAT?
Early July 1997	Publication of Schools White Paper emphasising the importance of literacy.
Early July 1997	Agree management structure for the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Group. Standards and Effectiveness Unit to make arrangements for the preparation of course training and 'distance' learning materials and the development of modular programmes for LEA/schools literacy INSET programme in 1998-99.
End of August 1997	SCAA offer advice on sharper literacy focus in NC Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
Late September 1997	Provide detailed GEST guidance. TTA introduce NC ITT in 12 HEIs.
End September 1997	Evaluation of NLP in progress, based on the analysis of Key Stage 2 test results, to feed into a third revision of a framework for teaching. Publication and analyses of NC Key Stage 2 results.
Mid October 1997	Run a national conference for CEOs and chairs of education committees to familiarise LEAs with GEST requirements. Send GEST invitations to LEAs.
End December 1997	LEAs advised of outcome of the evaluation of their GEST bids.
Early Spring 1998	LEAs advertise for local consultants (approximately 200 in total). Each LEA to establish literacy targets and agree literacy action plans with DfEE's Standards and Effectiveness Unit to meet National Literacy targets for 2002.
	Standards and Effectiveness Unit completes the preparation of training materials for the training of the LEA consultants and modular INSET programmes. The Standards and Effectiveness Unit completes production of course, conference and distance material based on aspects of NLP, revised in the light of evaluation. The materials will focus on:

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	i. managing literacy at school level; ii. planning a literacy hour; and iii. key areas of content and methods in literacy teaching. LEA identifies the 1st cohort of schools for intensive support.
End of March 1998	Each LEA recruits and appoints consultants in accordance with national guidelines to begin work in the summer term. Schools to amend development plans to allow 3 schools INSET days for literacy training, one in the summer of 1998 and the other two in the academic year 1998/99. Schools set and agree with their LEA school literacy targets in line with LEA and national targets.
First half of Summer Term 1998	Consultants and LEA line managers attend a week's national training course in preparation for work with schools from the second half of the summer term onwards. Standards and Effectiveness Unit ensure that trainers are available and appropriate training and resource materials are in place. OFSTED starts to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the national literacy programme.
Second half of Summer Term 1998	Against a background of a national focus on literacy standards, all primary schools will participate in 2 day conference(s) run by LEAs for heads, literacy governors, and literacy co-ordinators for all primary schools covering: i. the management of literacy; ii. timetabling and managing a literacy hour; and iii. key areas of literacy teaching to be prioritised. Standards and Effectiveness Unit ensure that appropriate training and resource materials are available. Headteachers of all primary schools inform governors about the implications of the strategy for the school. Schools write literacy action plans to specification, identifying priorities and how they are to be tackled. *All primary schools* devote some time to staff for introducing a literacy hour.
Autumn Term 1998	First INSET day for training in the management of a literacy hour. All schools timetable one hour per day dedicated literacy teaching time for every class. *The 1st cohort of schools receiving intensive support* will receive a visit from the local consultant and LEA line manager to begin the process of induction, school review, target setting, and action planning. The schools will also receive a 5 day training course for 2 key teachers (one of which should be the literacy co-ordinator) covering planning, classroom organisation and teaching methods. *Start of the National Year of Reading.* All schools participate in national and local initiatives for the National Year of Reading from the Autumn term of 1998 until the end of Summer 1999.

	The government introduce TTA's new NC ITT, with primary literacy focus. LEAs monitor schools and report on progress to National Targets. Publication of 1998 NC Key Stage 2 results.
Spring and Summer Terms 1999	*All schools* will devote 2 days to training in the teaching of literacy. LEAs will organise a programme of local training courses, conferences etc. to sustain and develop the literacy initiative in schools.
Summer Term 1999	*1st cohort of schools identified for intensive support will receive in the Summer term:* - 2 in-school training days using prepared training materials; and - 1 day visit by LEA consultant to evaluate progress and agree follow-up support. *2nd cohort of schools identified for intensive support will receive:* - 1 day preliminary visit from consultant and LEA adviser; - 2 days training for headteacher, literacy co-ordinator, and governor on the NLP framework and the management of literacy; and - 5 day training course for 2 teachers on planning, classroom organisation and teaching methods.
Autumn Term 1999 and Spring Term 2000	*2nd cohort of schools identified for intensive support will receive:* - 5 days non-contact time for literacy co-ordinator to disseminate work to other staff; - 1 day INSET support from LEA consultant; and - 3 days of visits from the LEA consultant to support work in the classroom. LEAs monitor schools and report on progress to National Targets. OFSTED reports on literacy progress in LEAs and schools, having inspected a representative national sample. Standards and Effectiveness Unit monitors progress.
Summer Term of 2000	*2nd cohort of schools receiving intensive support will receive:* - 2 in-school training days using prepared training materials; and - 1 day visit by LEA consultant to evaluate progress and agree follow-up support. *3rd Cohort of schools receiving intensive support start in the Summer term and will receive:*

	- 1 day preliminary visit from consultant and LEA adviser; - 2 days training for headteacher, literacy co-ordinator, and governor on the NLP framework and the management of literacy; and - 5 day training course for 2 teachers on planning, classroom organisation and teaching methods.
Summer Term 2001	*3rd Cohort of schools receiving intensive support will receive:* - 2 in-school training days using prepared training materials; and - 1 day visit by LEA consultant to evaluate progress and agree follow-up support. *4th Cohort of schools receiving intensive support start in the Summer term and will receive:* - 1 day preliminary visit from consultant and LEA adviser; - 2 days training for headteacher, literacy co-ordinator, and governor on the NLP framework and the management of literacy; and - 5 day training course for 2 teachers on planning, classroom organisation and teaching methods.
Autumn Term 2001 and Spring Term 2002	*4th Cohort of schools receiving intensive support will receive:* - 5 days non-contact time for literacy co-ordinator to disseminate work to other staff; - 1 day INSET support from LEA consultant; and - 3 days of visits from the LEA consultant to support work in the classroom. Publication and analyses of NC Key Stage 2 results. LEAs monitor schools and report on progress to National Targets. OFSTED reports on literacy progress in LEAs and schools. Standards and Effectiveness Unit monitors progress and refines strategy, if required. Boost INSET training for all schools as a final push towards the government's national literacy target.
Summer Term 2002	*4th Cohort of schools receiving intensive support will receive:* - 2 in-school training days using prepared training materials; and - 1 day visit by LEA consultant to evaluate progress and agree follow-up support.

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